



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
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5 Mar 2013

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1500.53B

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE STAFF TRAINING PROGRAM

Ref: (a) Commandant's Planning Guidance, October 2010  
(b) Marine Corps Service Campaign Plan 2012-2020  
(c) Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0, Marine Corps Operations  
(d) Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, Marine Corps Planning Process  
(e) MCO 5600.20P  
(f) SECNAV M-5210.1

1. Situation

a. Marine forces offer the joint force commander rapidly deploying and self-sustaining capabilities that can be employed in a wide range of contingencies. Marine Corps forces are normally organized and employed as a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The power of the MAGTF is derived from its unique integration of the Command Element, Ground Combat Element, Aviation Combat Element, and the Logistics Combat Element and bases and stations that produces a whole greater than the sum of its parts. In many cases, the MAGTF commander will also fulfill Marine component commander responsibilities in a Joint Task Force (JTF).

b. With this in mind, senior Marine commanders and their staffs must be prepared for the variety and complexity of military operations that may be assigned in support of a Joint Force Commander's campaign or contingency operations. MAGTFs must be able to quickly integrate with, and fight under, the joint force. The Marine Air-Ground Task Force Staff Training Program (MSTP) is designed to provide professional training and education, along with a rigorous staff exercise program, to maximize the proficiency and effectiveness of the staff and

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leadership of the MAGTF at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)/Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) level.

2. Cancellation. MCO 1500.53A.

3. Mission. The MSTP will provide training in MAGTF operations across the range of military operations, within the context of a Joint and/or Combined Task Force environment, to improve the warfighting skills of senior commanders and their staffs.

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent

(1) The MSTP will provide realistic, challenging training for MAGTF commanders and their staffs in accordance with references (a) and (b).

(2) MAGTF commanders and their staffs must possess the requisite planning, decision-making, execution and assessment skills to optimize operational success. We must not only train the way we intend to fight but also train smart. Exercise design is critical. Training scenarios must pit MAGTFs against skilled and determined adversaries capable of sophisticated actions. Where appropriate to the training objectives, these scenarios should also integrate the likely actions of other actors in the operational environment. Observations during training exercises, enhanced by the informed judgment and analysis of experienced trainers, will compare plans with actual outcomes.

(3) Our training must provide a learning environment where we treat errors as learning opportunities. Lessons identified must be learned and populated within the trained organization and across the Marine Corps. Without question, a key part of any exercise is the After Action Review (AAR). Facilitated AARs will be a positive means of providing meaningful feedback in the form of observations and assessments aimed at helping MAGTF commanders and their staffs improve the proficiency and effectiveness of their organizations.

b. Concept of Operations. The MSTP will be conducted in accordance with the following guidance.

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(1) Main Effort. Support to the Marine Corps Forces. Training in support of Marine Corps Forces will be provided in the form of a comprehensive (but adaptable) five-part training package delivered to MAGTF (MEF/MEB) commanders and staffs at least once every 2 years as directed in reference (b). Training for Major Subordinate Commands (MSC) will occur in conjunction with MAGTF Command Element training (assisted by other Training and Education Command (TECOM) training organizations), and will be tailored to address the unique capabilities and requirements of each organization. The MAGTF staff training package can be modified as required by the commander being supported. This training package can exist alone (building to a Command Post Exercise (CPX)) or within a larger exercise construct. The MSTP five-part MAGTF training package consists of the following.

(a) Command, Control, Communication, and Computers/Information Management/Combat Operations Center (C4/IM/COC) Workshop. The C4/IM/COC Workshop will provide functional training for commanders, battlestaffs, and watch standers as well as focused technical training for operators and information managers. Expertise and support from other training organizations within TECOM will be key to a successful execution of this event.

(b) Warfighting Seminar. The content of the seminar will be derived from two sources: those topics fundamental to MAGTF operations in accordance with references (c) and (d) and other topics identified by the MAGTF commanders and staffs in order to meet their specific training requirements. Training conducted to prepare MAGTF commanders and staffs for challenges specific to an operating environment may include an additional specialized seminar focused on real world requirements in the planned area of operations.

(c) Planning Practical Application. Instruction as required in the Marine Corps Planning Process will be followed by practical application of command and staff actions in planning, to include the production of a written operations order or fragmentary order to support the execution of a CPX.

(d) CPX. The commander and his staff will execute their order in a CPX. Based on the MAGTF commander's desires, the CPX may be linked to an existing operations plan, an emerging contingency, a preexisting scheduled exercise, or conducted as a stand-alone event. The MSCs of the MAGTF may also participate in the CPX (as operational commitments allow) to create the synergy of training the entire MAGTF.

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(e) AAR. The CPX will be closely followed by a facilitated AAR based on the observations from the trainers. The AAR will emphasize lessons identified, collective training goals achieved, and solutions or recommendations to take forward. The AAR can also serve as a forum for Marine Corps Forces and representatives from Headquarters Marine Corps to identify and capture emerging and future warfighting requirements.

(2) Supporting Efforts

(a) Provide a forum for warfighting discussion and professional development for newly selected brigadier generals and Senior Executive Service members through execution of the General Officer Warfighting Program (GOWP).

(b) Support the Marine Corps University (MCU) through augmentation of the MCU curriculum to enhance student preparation for assignment to the Operating Forces.

(c) Support emergent training requirements in Marine Corps Forces, combatant command Marine Corps service components, the Supporting Establishment and international partnered militaries on an "as requested" basis and within the availability of MSTP resources (budget, manpower, time, etc.).

(d) Execute doctrinal oversight and proponent duties as specified in reference (e).

(3) Augmentation Capability. The MSTP staff will constitute a resource of highly skilled MAGTF staff officers, prepared to deploy and augment Marine Corps Forces involved in contingencies, to include external/joint billet requirements.

c. Tasks

(1) Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration (DC, CD&I)

(a) Designate the Commanding General (CG), Training and Education Command (TECOM), as the Executive Agent for the conduct and administration of the MSTP to provide exercise opportunities and Modeling and Simulation (M&S) support to assess MAGTF capabilities and inform the Expeditionary Force Deployment System (EFDS).

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(b) Provide representation to the MSTP AARs to capture input to the EFDS.

(c) Establish and resource the MSTP Directorate, under the cognizance of CG, TECOM to:

1. Conduct phased training for MEF/MEB and MSC commanders and their staffs to improve their warfighting skills.

2. Provide tailored MAGTF staff training as requested by Marine Corps Forces.

3. Support joint/combined exercises, operations, and contingencies to enhance MAGTF capabilities in a joint/combined environment.

4. Conduct the GOWP to provide a forum for warfighting discussion and professional development.

5. Provide support to MCU to enhance preparation for student assignment to Marine Corps Forces.

6. Execute doctrinal oversight and proponent duties of those MSTP-assigned publications per reference (e).

7. Submit recommendations to the Commandant for appointment of retired Marine general officers, who collectively represent all elements of the MAGTF, to serve as MSTP Senior Mentor Highly Qualified Experts.

8. Report systemic and emerging trends semi-annually to the Commandant and inform Marine Corps Forces.

(2) Commanders, Marine Corps Forces

(a) In coordination with CG TECOM, schedule participation by assigned forces and staffs in the MSTP.

(b) Prioritize requested training.

(c) Request MSTP staff augmentation in support of contingencies as required.

(d) Participate in MSTP training to observe and/or serve as the MAGTF's higher service/functional component headquarters during exercise planning and execution.

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d. Coordinating Instructions

(1) Program Implementation Goals

(a) Each MEF and separately established MEB or Service Component 1-star commander will undergo the MSTP training cycle (or a modified portion thereof) in preparation for exercises directed by reference (b).

(b) Participating general officer commanders have wide latitude in selecting the forum and scope for conducting this training. For example, MSTP facilitated training can be conducted as a separate stand-alone exercise, or a MEB/Service Component 1-star commander can capitalize on the first three events in a MEF MSTP exercise cycle and then execute the CPX portion as a MEB/Service Component 1-star "battle staff only" event or in conjunction with MEB/1-star-level exercise already scheduled on the Training Exercise and Employment Plan.

(c) Training can also be part of a larger training event scheduled by CG TECOM or a Unified Geographic or Functional Combatant Commander (i.e., JTF Certification, Operation Plan exercise, or MEB/Expeditionary Strike Group training event).

(d) MSTP staff support to MCU will be in accordance with the annual academic calendar.

(2) Scheduling. MARFOR, MEF and MEB commanders, along with the President, MCU, will identify their requirements to the MSTP Operations Branch to assess the feasibility of support. CG TECOM will deconflict scheduling and, if possible, create opportunities for combined training with other forces.

(3) Additional/Emergent Requirements. Requirements arising outside scheduled events will be submitted directly to the Director, MSTP for consideration. Director, MSTP will strive to meet all requests and will inform CG TECOM and DC CD&I before turning down any requests for additional or emergent training.

(4) Terminology. To maximize the effectiveness of the program, the following terms must be understood and employed.

(a) Training Goals. A training goal is a broad statement of desired individual or collective proficiency with respect to a capability required for mission readiness/

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accomplishment. Training goals provide the framework for the development of academic instruction, exercise and scenario design, Planning Practical Application exercise, and the CPX. Training goals may be derived from three sources: 1) the Mission Essential Task List for the MAGTF; 2) topics identified by the MSTP as fundamental to MAGTF operations; and 3) topics identified by the commanders to meet their specific training requirements.

(b) Exercise Objectives. Exercise objectives are used to articulate how the five-part MAGTF exercise will support the commander's overall training goals. They drive exercise design.

(c) Exercise Design. Exercise design refers to a wide variety of activities that must be synchronized to create a realistic and challenging training experience. These activities include scenario development, opposing force planning and execution, intelligence control activities, M&S support, C4 technical architecture and support, replication of Higher and Adjacent HQ, exercise control, and exercise support. Exercise design is used to create an environment for the training audience to plan and execute operations.

(d) AAR. The Director, MSTP guides participants during the facilitated AAR to identify deficiencies and lessons learned. MSTP AARs will provide, to the maximum extent possible, observations and empirical data to the training audience that compares what was planned against what was executed. MSTP will present sufficient analysis to facilitate learning and discussion by the training audience. The AAR participants will include the MAGTF commander and his battlestaff, MSC commanders and their battlestaffs, and additional staff officers as designated. The AAR will be conducted within 48 hours of the end of the CPX.

(e) Final Exercise Report (FER). The MSTP will produce a FER following CPX completion. The FER provides an in-depth treatment of the topics and analysis presented at the AAR plus additional observations (good and bad) that were important but too numerous or possibly too contentious for inclusion in the facilitated AAR. The FER will be provided to the MAGTF commander no later than 30 days following MRX completion.

5. Administration and Logistics

a. Administration. Planning and coordination between the MSTP and the training audience will be accomplished via a series of planning conferences including a Concept Development Conference, Initial Planning Conference, Mid-term Planning Conference, and Final Planning Conference. Agreements between the principals shall be incorporated into an Exercise Agreement (EA) co-signed by the Director, MSTP and chief of staff of the MAGTF being trained, as well as representatives from other units providing support or participating in the exercise.

b. Records Management. Records created as a result of this directive shall include records management requirements to ensure the proper maintenance and use of records, regardless of format or medium, to promote accessibility and authorized retention per the approved records schedule and reference (f).

c. Logistics

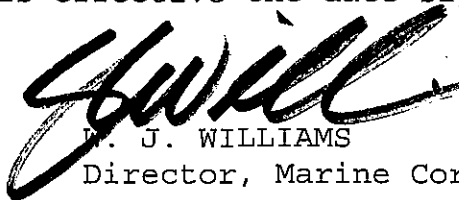
(1) Support. The MSTP will be largely self-sufficient and will require minimal logistic support from the training audience. Details of support provided by the training audience to the MSTP will be specified in the EA.

(2) Fiscal. The costs associated with the MSTP deployment and employment will be programmed for and executed by CG TECOM.

6. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Total Force.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.



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Director, Marine Corps Staff

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